



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Michigan Educational Assessment Program Reports

August 2007

1. When did Michigan begin MEAP testing and how has it evolved?

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) was initiated by the State Board of Education, supported by the Governor and funded by the Michigan legislature through Public Act 307 of 1969 (Section 14). From 1969 until 1972, MEAP used norm-referenced tests from a commercial test publisher. Students' scores were ranked in comparison to each other, but gave no information in terms of meeting a specified standard. In 1973-74, Michigan educators began working with Michigan Department of Education (MDE) staff to develop specific performance objectives to serve as the basis for the first tests built to Michigan specifications.

Current MEAP tests are based on the Content Standards developed by Michigan educators and approved by the Michigan State Board of Education in 1995. MEAP tests are criterion-referenced, meaning that each student's results are judged and reported against a set performance standard. If a student meets the standard, it means he/she meets expectations on the recommended state curriculum.

Educators from throughout Michigan continue to revise and update Michigan curriculum documents that serve as the basis for MEAP and in the development and ongoing improvement of these tests.

The MEAP tests have been recognized nationally as sound, reliable and valid measurements of academic achievement. Students who score high on these tests have demonstrated significant achievement in valued knowledge and skill. Further, the tests provide the only common denominator in the state to measure in the same way, at the same time, how all Michigan students are doing on the same skills and knowledge.

2. What grades and subjects were tested during the Spring 2007 testing cycle?

The Spring 2006 MEAP High School Test (HST) was administered to Grade 12 students. The subjects tested were English language arts (reading, and writing) mathematics, science, and social studies.

In addition, any grade 10, 11, or 12 student who had previously tested and wanted an opportunity to test for a higher score has the opportunity to test.

3. Why are results only reported for the Class of 2007?

Because students have several opportunities to test during their high school career, the scores are accumulated by the Michigan Merit Awards office and reported after all students in a class have had an opportunity to test. It would be inaccurate to report scores for all 10th graders for instance, because only a relatively few students test at that grade level.

4. What does a one percent improvement in the scores represent?

Although a one percentage point change in a statewide score over the previous year could be significant, a local district might not want to rely on such a change as a significant indicator for much smaller groups of students. In considering gains or declines in test scores, it is best to look for trends over at least a three-year period, as opposed to looking at a relatively small change in one year.

5. What do the performance levels mean?

A: The MEAP tests measure what students know and can do in relation to the state curriculum standards.

All MEAP tests have four performance levels.

Level 1 – indicates that a student has “Exceeded Michigan Standards”

Level 2 – indicates that a student has “Met Michigan Standards”

Level 3 – indicates that a student has demonstrated “Basic” knowledge and skills of Michigan Standards
Level 4 – indicates that a student is considered to be at an “Apprentice” level, showing little success in meeting Michigan standards

6. Who sets the standards for the MEAP tests?

Groups of educators, teachers, and school administrators with expertise in a subject and grade set the performance level standards for the MEAP tests. A skilled assessment expert guides this group through a nationally recognized process to set the standards.

7. Who scores MEAP tests?

Pearson Educational Measurement has been contracted to provide scoring services. Multiple-choice responses are machine scored and verified through a quality control process. Written responses are scored at separate facilities by a cadre of extensively trained scorers. Each written response is read by at least two independent scorers who use a method specifically developed for large scale assessments. Quality control checks are in place to ensure consistency throughout the scoring process.

8. Who develops the tests?

Test development is a multi-step process involving hundreds of Michigan administrators, teachers, curriculum experts and students. Assessment committees are convened from across the state with members chosen to represent the various educational professional organizations, and local and intermediate school district educators.

Items are developed and reviewed by Bias Review Committees (BRC's) for fairness and to assure that no group is unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged. Educators and citizens representing the diverse demographics of the state are on these committees. Items are then reviewed by Content Advisory Committees (CAC's) comprised of classroom teachers and educators at the grade levels to be tested. All MEAP content is reviewed, primarily for two considerations: grade-appropriateness and to ensure that items reflect Michigan curriculum

standards. All items are field tested and reviewed a second time by the BRC's and CAC's.

Test designs are developed involving content experts, teachers, school administrators and assessment experts. The content to be tested is identified from the state curriculum as well as the types and format of the items. Several items are identified to measure each component of the state curriculum. Items are different for each test cycle to limit teaching to the test, but they consistently measure the same components of the curriculum.

9. How often are the tests changed or updated and why?

The test designs remain the same until the curriculum changes. Different test items appear on assessments from year to year but each item continues to assess the Michigan Curriculum Frameworks. Any time the assessments change, educators are informed to provide an opportunity for them to adjust instruction before student scores and school results are used.